APSNA POSITION STATEMENT ON ADOLESCENT DISTRACTED DRIVING

Authors

- The following statement was developed by the Trauma Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association (APSNA) and approved by the APSNA membership at the 2014 Scientific Assembly.

Synopsis

- This Position Statement was developed to help educate health care providers in teaching adolescents and families related to the dangers of distracted driving.
- A proactive teaching approach is key to capture youth prior to when they begin driving. Each provider is encouraged to seize every possible opportunity to interact with children in the pre-teen to young adolescent age group to discuss anticipatory guidance related to distracted driving.
- APSNA believes that childhood “injuries” are not accidents, yet preventable sequelae of unsafe behaviors that could be prevented by proper education, adult supervision, use of protective devices and legislative support for product safety and appropriate laws to protect our most precious resource, our children.
- APSNA strongly encourages all health care providers, teachers, legislators, public safety advocates and government officials to join the fight against distracted driving.

Definitions

- Distracted driving is any activity that could divert attention away from the primary task of driving. This includes, but is not limited to texting, talking on a cell phone, eating, drinking, grooming, reading, using a GPS, watching a video, or adjusting a radio or player (Adeola & Gibbons, 2013).

Statistics

- According to the National Occupant Protection Use Survey approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell-phones or manipulate electronic devices while driving every day (United States Department of Transportation, 2013).
- In 2012, over 171.3 billion text messages are sent every month in the United States.
- A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive and 20% admit to extended, multi-message text conversations while driving. (www.distraction.gov).
- 2012: 3,328 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver.
- 2012: 421,000 people injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver: 9% increase over 2011.
- Drivers are 23 fold more likely to crash if texting and driving.
- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash.
- For drivers 15 – 19 years old involved in fatal crashes, 21% were using a cell phone.
- 10% of parents admit to having extended multi-message texting while driving.
- Drivers believe their own crash risk is lower than other drivers’ crash risk.
- 28% of teens correctly believe that talking on a cell phone while driving poses a risk, 79% recognize that text messaging while driving is very dangerous.

Facts

- Tasks needed for driving include visual, auditory, manual and cognitive skills.
- Novice drivers lack experience and knowledge of more experienced drivers thus increasing the risks of crashes.
- Teens have an increased feeling of invincibility leading to risk-taking behaviors.
- Multitasking while driving impairs performance.
- Driving while talking on cell phones increases risk of injury and property damage fourfold.
- Sending a text removes the eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. If travelling at 55 MPH, this is equal to driving the length of an entire football field blind.
- Laws prohibiting distracted driving vary from state to state.

Suggestions to increase knowledge of adolescent distracted driving:

- Be informed. Review the FCC website on Distracted Driving: http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/distracted-driving
- Review comprehensive information including the most recent research on Distracted Driving: http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html
- Evaluate the NHTSA “5 to Drive” Teen Safety Campaign to Reduce High Death Rates in Teens and incorporate this information in anticipatory guidance activities. Visit: http://www.nhtsa.gov
- Lead by example. Support proposed public laws and regulations that STOP or limit the use of electronic devices while driving.
• Encourage families to be informed and set firm rules for household members.
• Encourage driver education that includes information on distracted driving and ways to avoid risk.
• Become involved in local, regional and national efforts regarding trauma prevention related to distracted driving.
• Utilize each opportunity to provide anticipatory guidance to teens and families related to dangers of distracted driving.

References


FGA 12/13